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ABSTRACT

This fact sheet presents a case for public funding of after-school programs for children and youth. The fact sheet begins by describing the risks to which children and youth are exposed and the variety of ways in which children and youth spend time after school. The benefits of participating in after-school programming for children and youth related to drug use, early parenthood, academic achievement, school attendance, and student motivation are described. The fact sheet notes that although the out-of-school time field lacks a national professional development system, several initiatives are building components of a state-wide system. The fact sheet also points out that low wages contribute to high turnover rates among after-school program staff and directors. Information on the cost for and cost-effectiveness of after-school services is then presented. The fact sheet indicates that public support for after-school programs continues to grow, with most voters believing that there is a need for organized after-school activities. Finally, the fact sheet discusses trends in public funding, focusing on the federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers program and investments of the Child Care and Development Fund. (Contains 54 references.) (KB)

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National Institute on Out-of-School Time
Center for Research on Women
Wellesley College

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Making the Case

A Fact Sheet on Children and Youth in Out-of-School Time

Children and youth today

There are 61,297,467 children and youth ages 5-19 living in the United States (U.S. Census, 2002).

The racial and ethnic diversity of America's children and youth (under 18) continues to grow. According to 2000 Census data, 68.6% were white, 15.1% were black or African American, 7.6% indicated "other", 4% chose 2 or more races, 3% were Asian, and 1% were American Indian. Seventeen percent reported Hispanic ethnic origin (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2002).

From a study of child poverty in 20 modern industrialized countries, the United States ranks 19th at 20.3%, double the average poverty rate of all the other countries combined (Vleminckx & Smeeding (Eds.), 2001).

In the year 2001, child poverty remained at 16 percent for the third year in a row and children in households headed by single mothers were nearly five times as likely as children living in households headed by married parents to be living in poverty: 39% vs. 8% (Anderson Moore & Redd, 2002).

In 69% of all married-couple families with children ages 6-17, both parents work outside of the home. In 79% of single-mother families and 84% of single-father families with children ages 6-17, the custodial parent works outside of the home (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2001).

Overweight children and adolescents are at an increased risk of developing type II diabetes, cardiovascular problems, orthopedic abnormalities, gout, arthritis, and skin problems. Being overweight also is likely to negatively affect children's social and psychological development and it has been linked to the premature onset of puberty (Child Trends Data Bank, 2002).

The more violence children watch on TV, the more likely they are to behave in aggressive or harmful ways toward others, become less sensitive to others' pain and suffering, be more fearful of the world around them, and increase their appetite for violence in entertainment and in real life (Center for Media Education, 1997; American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001).

Results from the 2002 Monitoring the Future study of 44,000 8th, 10th and 12th graders showed that more than half of 12th graders have used an illicit drug, 30% have used some drug other than marijuana and 11% have used ecstasy. Percentages of 8th and 10th graders using any illicit drug declined and were at their lowest level since 1993 and 1995 respectively. Cigarette smoking has declined 50% in each grade since its peak in 1996 (NIDA & NIH, 2002).

Despite a steady growth in the juvenile population over the past decade, there has been a 23% drop in juvenile violent crime arrests since 1996. In 2000, juveniles accounted for 12.2% of arrests for serious violent crime, down 4.4% from 1999. This decline is due in significant part to the nearly 43 percent decline in violent crime arrests of black youths, the largest decline among represented racial groups (Children's Defense Fund, 2002).

Black youths across all age groups are more likely to be victims of violent crime than their white counterparts. Black males ages 15-19 are murdered at a rate more than seven times that of white males in the same age group (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2001).

Children and youth spend time after school in a variety of ways

The best data available indicates that there are approximately 8 million children ages 5 to 14 that spend time without adult supervision on a regular basis. This number includes 4 million children between the ages of 5 and 12 and

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another estimated 4 million youth ages 13 and 14 (Miller, 1999).

For children ages 6- to 9-years old, researchers found that before- and after-school programs and care by relatives are the most commonly reported forms of care (21%) while the mother is working (Capizzano, Tout, & Adams, 2000).

More than half of teens (54%) say they wouldn't watch so much TV or play video games if they had other things to do after school (Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates, 2001).

About one-third of 8th graders, one-fourth of 10th graders, and one-fifth of 12th graders watched 4 or more hours of television on weekdays in 2000 (Child Trends Data Bank, 2002).

During the school year, more than 1 in 10 children regularly spend time alone or with a sibling under 13; but these children spend twice as much time unsupervised in the summer — 10 hours a week more on average — compared to the school year (Capizzano, Adelman & Stagner, 2002).

Nationally, more than half of teens wish there were more community or neighborhood-based programs available after school, and two thirds of those surveyed said they would participate in such programs if they were available (Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates, 2001).

A three-city study showed that while two-thirds of 13- to 15-year-olds reported having constructive things to do during their out-of-school hours, only half of 16- to 17-year-olds and one-third of 18- to 19-year-olds reported being engaged constructively (Sipe, Ma, & Gambone, 1998).

Young people with nothing to do during out-of-school hours miss valuable chances for growth and development. The odds are high that youth with nothing positive to do and nowhere to go will find things to do and places to go that negatively influence their development and futures (McLaughlin, 2000).

Children and youth benefit from participation in afterschool programming

Students who spend no time in extracurricular activities are 49% more likely to use drugs and 37% more likely to become teen parents than those who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2002).

Students participating in California's After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program (ASLSNPP) improved their standardized test scores (SAT-9) in reading (5.8%) more than scores of students statewide (3%). Participants who attended more than 150 days showed the largest increases in SAT-9. ASLSNPP participants also had better school attendance (University of California at Irvine, 2001).

Of the 1,412 students attending the National Save the Children Partners and Collaboratives tutoring/homework assistance programs who were evaluated, 84% maintained high standards or showed improvement in either grades, homework completion, study habits, or other measures of academic success (Aguirre International, 2000).

In a longitudinal analysis of LA's BEST the results show that higher levels of participation in LA's BEST led to better subsequent school attendance which was related to higher academic achievement on standardized tests of mathematics, reading, and language arts (Huang, Gribbons, Kim, Lee, & Baker, 2000).

A national evaluation of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America mentoring program provides evidence that participation in Big Brothers Big Sisters programs can positively affect at-risk youth. Participants were 45% less likely than their counterparts to initiate drug use during the study period and 27.4% less likely to initiate alcohol use (Grossman, Resch, & Tierney, 2000).

Researchers studying participants in Cornell University's Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development program found that the length of time youth participate in 4-H was found to have a significant impact on asset development. Longer participation led to higher scores on the developmental asset areas (Rodriguez, Hirschl, Mead, & Goggin, 1999).

Recent research shows that at the elementary and high school educational levels, high achievers spent more time in "high yield" out-of-school learning activities than low achievers. "High yield" out-of- school learning activities include such diverse activities as reading, writing, studying, being tutored, watching

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educational TV, playing with computers, going to afterschool programs and clubs, volunteering, doing a hobby, and participating in organized sports (Clark, 2002).

In the year two evaluation of TASC, 84% of principals responding to a survey reported that the TASC afterschool program had improved the overall effectiveness of the school, student motivation (81%), student attitude toward school (81%), and student attendance (77%) (Policy Studies Associates, 2001).

High School students who participated in the Quantum Opportunities Program (which is targeted towards low-income teenagers in several large American cities) were more likely to be high school graduates (63%) compared to non-participants (42%) and more likely to go on to post-secondary schools (42%) compared to non-participants (16%) (Lattimore, Mihalic, Grotpeter, & Taggart, 1998).

After-school programs provide a strong base for nurturing children's literacy development and providing a variety of types of literacy experiences (Spielberger & Halpern, 2002).

There is significant research which shows that participation in after-school programs is positively associated with better school attendance, more positive attitude towards school work, higher aspirations for college, finer work habits, better interpersonal skills, reduced drop out rates, higher quality homework completion, less time spent in unhealthy behaviors, and improved grades (Clark, 1988; Hamilton & Klein, 1998; Huang, Gribbons, Kim, Lee, & Baker, 2000; McLaughlin, 2000; Posner & Vandell, 1994, 1999; Schinke, 1999; U.S. Dept. of Education, 1998).

Adolescents who spend time in communities that are rich in developmental opportunities for them experience less risk and show evidence of higher rates of positive development. A diversity of program opportunities in each community is more likely to support broad adolescent development and attract the interest of and meet the needs of a greater number of youth (National Research Council, 2002).

The out-of-school time workforce

The out-of-school time field lacks a national professional development system. However, several statewide initiatives are in pursuit of building components of a statewide system. Alaska, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Michigan and New York are at various stages of developing core competencies, career lattices and school-age credentials. Indiana is in the process of developing a combined school-age and youth development credential and Massachusetts has created a set of core competencies and is in the process of developing a career lattice (National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2003; Wheelock College Institute of Leadership and Career Initiatives, 2002).

Fifty-six percent (56%) of school-age practitioners in Minnesota cite low pay as the number one reason for leaving their jobs. Data from the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network indicates that among both school-age and early childhood practitioners, the lower the hourly wage, the higher the turnover rate (Wilder Research Center, 2001).

In Minnesota, the average hourly wage for school-age directors was $12.28, in Boston, the average hourly wage for site coordinators was $14.51, and in Oklahoma, nearly 80% of program staff earn less than $10,000 annually (Wilder Research Center, 2001; Associated Early Care and Education, Inc., 2001; Dykstra & Dunn, 2001).

Staff turnover rates in military child development centers have been reduced by 300% annually since the Military Child Care Act was passed by Congress in 1989. The Act paved the way for a training system in which staff receive ongoing training and education that is linked to increases in compensation (Duff Campbell et al., 2000).

Respondents to the 2001 National Career Development Survey of early childhood/school-age staff reported that stipends, wage supplement programs, scholarships and loan forgiveness programs were among their preferred strategies to combating staff turnover (Wheelock College Institute for Leadership and Career Initiatives, 2002).

Cost of services

Findings from the MOST Initiative evaluation estimated that a full year program costs approximately $4,000 per child. Costs drop to $3,000 when space and utilities are donated. Administrative time and other in-kind donations

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are excluded from these estimates (Halpern et al., 1999).

According to a report by Parents United for Child Care of Boston, the annual cost per child for a "school-year only" program in Boston is $4,349. A full-year program (providing after-school care for 38 weeks and full-day care for 14 weeks, including vacations, holidays, and summer) is $5,989 (Wechsler et al., 2001).

A recent report calculates the potential national cost of ensuring developmental opportunities and supports for school-age youth (6-17) would be 144 billion dollars annually. That is a cost of $2.55 per hour or $3,060 annually per youth. The resulting return on every dollar is a gain of $10.51 for every dollar invested (Newman, Smith, & Murphy, 2001).

A recent study by the Rose Institute pertaining to California's proposition 49 concludes that afterschool programs in California are cost-effective. The study indicates that the return to taxpayers ranges from $2.99 to $4.03 for every dollar spent on afterschool programs and the benefit to students attending afterschool programs ranges from $2.29 to $3.04 for every dollar spent on afterschool programs. Expenditures produce benefits in the areas of reduced child care costs, improved school performance, increased compensation, reduced crime costs, and reduced welfare costs (Brown et al., 2002).

Public support continues to grow

Nine in ten parents (90%) who say they are not home in the afternoon when their children return from school describe afterschool programs as an absolute necessity (Afterschool Alliance, 2002).

The presence of afterschool programs in public schools has risen. In 2001, 67% of principals reported that their schools offer optional afterschool programs and 60% reported that their programs began within the past five years (Belden Russonello & Stewart, Research and Communications, 2001).

For the fifth straight year nine in ten voters continue to believe that there is a need for some type of organized activity or place where children can go after school every day. Voters most strongly support afterschool programs for the potential to keep kids safe and away from abusive behavior (Afterschool Alliance, 2002).

In a random survey of 1178 police chiefs, sheriffs, and prosecutors, respondents were asked to rank the impact of several strategies to reduce youth violence and crime. By more than a 4 to one margin, respondents chose providing afterschool programs for school-age youngsters and more educational child care programs for preschool children rather than hiring more police officers as having the greatest impact in reducing youth violence and crime (Mason-Dixon Polling and Research, 2002).

In October 2000, "Lights On Afterschool" events were held in more than 1,200 communities nationwide and supported by more than a dozen national partners. Those numbers grew in 2001 to more than 3,600 events across the nation, with 60 national partners and again in 2002, when 5,000 events were held and more than 100 national partners were on board (Afterschool Alliance, 2003).

Trends in Public Funding

Federal funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program began at $750,000 in 1995, rose to $453 million in 2000, and increased again to $1 billion for fiscal year 2002. Currently 1.3 million children and youth are attending programs funded in approximately 6,800 schools in 1597 communities across the country (Committee on Education and the Workforce, 2000; U.S. Dept. of Education, 2002).

The Child Care and Development Fund represents a significant public investment - $4.8 billion in federal dollars and an estimated $2.2 billion in state funds in fiscal year 2002. In addition to these figures, many states are transferring significant amounts of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to CCDF, and are directly spending TANF on afterschool programs and child care (Child Care Bureau, 2002).

In Fiscal Year 2000, 36 percent of 1.75 million children receiving CCDF subsidies were school-aged (age 6-12). Another 10% were kindergarten age (age 5). For school-aged children receiving subsidies, half were in center-based programs, almost a third were in family child care homes, and 17% were in the child's own home (Child Care Bureau, 2002).

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